

The Two Witnesses;

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RELIGION

Supported by

Reason

AND DIVINE

Revelation.

Being the Substance of a Lecture. SERMON,
Preach'd at the North-SOCIETY in Lyme,
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lished at their Desire.

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Pastor of the Church at Killingwerth.

Isai. xlv. 8. *Shew your selves Men.*
1 Thes. v. 21. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*

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RELIGION

Supported by Reason

AND

Divine Revelation.

II CORINTHIANS, XIII. 1.

*THIS is the third time I am coming to you :
in the mouth of two or three Witnesses
shall every word be Established.*

THIS Apostle having been greatly Opposed, and severely Reflected on by some false Teachers, that were sprung up in the Church; who by sly Insinuations and unnatural'd Representations, labour'd to bring both his Person and Ministry into contempt: By which we may see that the best of Times are not free from Detraction; nor the best of Men free from the *strife of Tongues*. That the faith of the weak might not be sub-
verted,

verted, the progress of the Gospel hindered, nor these offenders go unpunished, the Apostle endeavours to Vindicate his Character and Mission; as we may see in the foregoing Chapters. The unworthy treatment and undeserved ill-usage he had met with, and the ill-impressions it might make upon some, obliged the Apostle to do himself Justice, by saying those things in his own Favour & Commendation, that was disagreeable to his modest and humble disposition.

These false Teachers had said, Chap. 10 Ver. 10. *His letters (say they) are weighty and powerful ; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible.* Ver. 11. *Let such an one think this, that what we are in word by letters, when we are absent, such will we be also in deed, when we are present.*

These were false Teachers, Chap. 11. ver. 13 *For such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.* In answer to these, with how much Modesty doth he speak of himself? Ver. 23. *Are they Ministers of Christ ? (I speak as a fool) I am more : in Labours more abundant, in Stripes above measure, ---* So Chap. 12. ver. 11. *I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing.*

Having

Having said much in his own Vindication and for the support of the Truth, he proceeds, as in the words of our Text : He lets such Offenders know what they might expect when he came, that he would proceed against them and lay them under Censure ; and in this affair he would not be influenced by his Passions or Prejudice, but would proceed in a Regular manner ; not lording it over God's Heritage, but be an Ensamble to the Flock : He would not proceed against them but as the Charge should be supported by proper Evidence ; *In the mouth of two or three Witnesses shall every word be Established.*

This his designed Method, was according to and agreeable with an ancient Statute, Deut. 19. 15. *One Witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two Witnesses, or at the mouth of three Witnesses shall the matter be established.* Which Rule we observe confirmed by our SAVIOUR, Mat. 18. 16 *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

It hath its foundation in Reason. The nature and circumstances of things renders a regard to Evidence, and the testimony of others highly necessary : For it is not proper we shou'd be Evidence in our own case ; for our Interest may

may bias us, and our Prejudice blind us. Our SAVIOUR saith, Joh. 5. 31. *If I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true.* His Evidence would have been true, in its self; but according to common received and established Rules, could not be received as proper Evidence.

There is a great deal we cannot know our selves; our faculties are so limited & circumscribed within such narrow bounds, that there is but little said and done that falls under our Personal observation: We need Information from others of much that is both necessary and pleasant, for us to be acquainted with. We can be but in one place at one and the same time: We can see but a little way round us. Our hearing serves us no better than our sight. Many things we forget, and more we do not understand, & therefore we must depend upon the Information, Evidence and Testimony of others.

D O C T R I N E.

That Two Credible Witnesses to Prove the Truth of any Word or Matter of Fact, is a sufficient Foundation for our Faith and Conduct.

I. *This is sufficient and necessary for our Conduct in the Common Affairs of Life.* By this we Conduct our selves, Concert our own Affairs, take proper Measures to shun Inconveniencies, secure our

our Selves and Others, and procure to our selves Advantages convenient and necessary.

II. *This is needful & sufficient in all Determinations of a Civil Judicature* A thing or matter Judged of without Evidence, or contrary to it, would be so far from a Legal Administration, that it may be look'd upon as an Arbitrary Decision.

III. *We are also to Judge of Facts as they are Evidenced and Proved by Testimony, in every Ecclesiastical Process.* This is what our Great MASTER has Commanded, and Reason Requires; and we are to govern our selves accordingly; not regarding the Reflections of unthinking men fond of Arbitrary Power: Although they may say that the Church in her proceedings look like a Civil Court; it as *Moses*, that was to make all things belonging to the Sanctuary, according to the Pattern shewn him in the Mount, we do all things, and Judge, as our SAVIOUR has Commanded and Justice Requires, we then in our several Capacities, shew our selves to be Workmen that need not to be ashamed.

IV. *Testimony is also needful & sufficient for the Support & Proof of those Articles & Truths we are to believe.* GOD doth not require us to believe any thing for a Truth that is not Proved to be

so. Our Blessed SAVIOUR refers His Hearers to the Works that He did, for the Truth of what He said, Joh. 14 10, 11 *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of my self: But the Father that dwelleth in me, He doth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake.* So Chap. 5. 32, 36. He refers Himself to the Testimony of *John the Baptist*, and to His own *Miraculous Work*: *There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. But I have greater witness than that of John: For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* The Witnesses that He bear of Himself was not false, but infallibly true; yet not a Truth sufficiently supported to gain the belief of his Hearers, without such other Evidence as He refers them to.

It is the last of these named Instances, viz. of the Usefulness and Necessity of Testimony, that is designed for the Subject of our present Entertainment: *The Witnesses that we have for those Truths we profess to Believe, are Natural Light or Reason, and GOD's Testimony, called Divine Revelation.*

If the use of the Term *Witnesses*, as applied in this case, should seem forc'd or strain'd,
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it may not be amiss to consider a like improvement of the Term ; Rom 8.16 *The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God.* Also 1 Joh 5 8 *There are Three that bear Witness in Earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood : And these Three agree in One.*

That there is such a concurrence of Evidence, will best appear by shewing, in sundry important articles of our Faith, and that we have Reason to believe them because they are so Proved.

I. *That there is a Superior Power that we call GOD.* This is what Reason and Divine Revelation both agree in. And may be Proved by these following Arguments,

1. *That there is Motion, it is a proof to Reason that there is a First Mover.* If there be Motion, then there must be something that Moveth ; and this Motion must be from it self, or from some other thing : If from it self originally, then the Mover and the Moved must be the same, or which amounts to the same, viz. that the Cause & Effect are the same ; which is impossible. There must therefore be a First Cause or Mover, which puts all other things into Motion, which is GOD. Nor will the force of the Argument be taken off, by saying or supposing, That this Motion may run back infinitely ; i. e. That the Motion we see or perceive, may be moved by a known Mover,

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and that by another, and so this infinitely back. But this cannot be: For if a series of Bodies moved, can be supposed to be Infinite, when taken together, it will be equal to an infinite Body moved; and this Moved will not less require a Mover than a finite Body, but infinitely more.

And agreeable to this, is the Testimony of DIVINE REVELATION. The Apostle arguing the same point and proving to the *Athenians* this Principle, he uses the same Argument, *Act 17. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain also of your own Poets have said, For we are also His Off-spring.*

2. *We conclude there is a Divine Being, from the Make, Frame, Beauty, Regularity and Excellency of this Visible Creation, or the Things we see round about us.* When we lift up our Eyes to the Heavenly Bodies over our Heads, behold their Motions, consider their Magnitude, Distances and Influences, can we think them other than the Works of some Intelligent Being? View this lower World, the Stability of some parts of it, the Mutability of other, the Beauty and Harmony of all; can we think these things came by Chance? If one that had long wandred in a wide Wilderness, should at length find a fine House, a well-cultivated Field, pleasant Gardens & fruitful Trees, surely he would not think this a spontaneous Production; but would
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be satisfied it was the Work & Contrivance of an Intelligent being : If he saw no man there, he would conclude some body had been there, and done these things to some useful purpose. The characters of a Divine Being written so plainly upon the face of this visible Creation, that he that runs may read it : it is written as with the pen of Iron and with the point of a Diamond.

Divine Revelation is a Witness to the same truth, and Argues from the same principle. The Psalmist saith, *Psalm 8. 3. When I consider thy Heavens, the works of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained ; What is Man that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of Man, that thou visitest him ?* So the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse.* It may be so fairly deduced from this Principle, as to render even the Heathen World without Excuse.

3. *Our Reason affords us a Proof of the Existence of a Divine Being, from a consideration of our own being.* If we are sure of any thing, we are sure of our own existence or being. If we have a being, it must be from our selves, or from some other being or from nothing. From our selves we could not have it ; for before we
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had a being we were nothing : Our being could not be produced by nothing, because nothing can have no operation. To suppose something done without operation ; or which is the same, something being done without any thing being done, is a plain contradiction. If nothing has operation, or a power of working, then it is something, and is no longer nothing. That we are intelligent or thinking beings, we are as sure of, as that we have a being : For we know that we have a being, by our being intelligent creatures. By this we know that He that made us is an intelligent Being, because we are so our selves : For that Being that is not intelligent, can no more produce or make a thinking being, than nothing can make something ; For if it be not Intelligent or Rational in that respect, it is nothing and can produce nothing.

4. *Our Reason draws a Proof of the Existence of the Divine Being, from the general Consent of Mankind.* Nations far distant from one another, with whom they had no Communication, and of whom they had no Knowledge, yet they agree in this, and have one common sentiment that there is some Supreme Divine Being. Men of all Climates, of all Complexions, Barbarians, Sythians, Bond & Free, agree in this, own and acknowledge some sort of Divinity. It seems to be the Language of Nature and the Voice

Voice of Reason. It is what good men would wish were true, if it were not so; and none but a Fool would say in his heart there is no God.

By general or universal Consent, we are not to understand all and every Man, but a large majority, by far the bigger part of mankind: For if all and every man assented to this truth that there is a God, there would be no need to use any Argument about it.

Thus we have shew'd that Reason has given its Testimony that there is a GOD, *Divine Revelation* is so full of it, there is no need of Quotation; nay, the very notion of *Revelation*, renders the supposition necessary: For there can be no Divine Revelation without a Divine Being.

II. *The Two Witnesses Evidence also, That this Divine Being is a God of all possible Perfections.* We have proved already, That He is an Intelligent, or Understanding Wise Being; this we conclude from our having understanding, or a thinking power in our selves.

We shall insist upon some of these Perfections.

I. *That God is Omnipotent, or a Being having in Himself all Power.* He having Created all things, Made us and all the world out of nothing, is a proof of this. The description of this Power exerting it self is wonderful and inimita-

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inimitable, Gen. 1. 3. *And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.* No sooner said then done. This is an Evidence of an Omnipotent Power. *Longinus*, although an Heathen, makes a proper Remark upon this Expression, viz. That it was becoming the Majesty and Grandure of the Divine Being, and shew'd him that wrote it to have been Divinely Inspired.

2. That *God is Eternal*, is what we may conclude, from *the Consideration of the Nature of the Divine Being*. God could not be Omnipotent, if He were not Eternal. Omnipotency belongs not to that Being that had a Beginning. Whatsoever hath a Beginning, was once Nothing; and when it was nothing could act nothing. Where there is nothing there is no power. So if He should cease to be, there would then be no Power. A Creature that hath beginning and ending, may in the time of its being, have had Power, but not all Power nor was Omnipotent. That which is Omnipotent cannot be made Miserable, nor made not to be. He can do nothing to purpose, as an Omnipotent Being, that cannot preserve himself from Outward force or Inward decay.

This is the Testimony of Reason, and Revelation agrees to the same. Rev. 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which was, and which is, and which is to come,*

come, the Almighty. There is an inseparable relation between Omnipotence and Eternity, and Immortality a consequence of both, 1 Tim. 1. 17. *Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever, Amen.*

3. *He is a Self-Existent Being.* That which is without Beginning or End, must have the Root of its being in its self: For every being must either Exist of it self, or not of it self. That which Exists not of its self, must derive its Existence from some other, and so have a beginning and be dependent, and consequently be neither Omnipotent nor Eternal. This is the Voice of Reason, conformable to the Testimony of Divine Revelation; Exod. 3. 14. *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* It seems designed by the Holy Spirit in these words, to prove both Eternity and Self-Existence: God is of Himself and for Himself.

4. *God is Infinite:* And Infinite He must be, because he can be Limited by no other as to his Existence, being Self-Existent. For if there were any Being able to Limit Him, He must be Inferior to that Being. He must in that case be Dependent, and consequently not Omnipotent, not Eternal, not Self-Existent; because He must be beholden to that Being for being

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being what He is, and that He is not confined to narrower Limits. Besides, if His Presence were any where Excluded, He would not be there ; and if not there, He might be supposed to be not elsewhere : and thus * He might be supposed not to be at all.

This is the Testimony not only of Reason but of Divine Revelation, Psal. 149. 5. *Great is our Lord and His great Power, His understanding is Infinite.* God is every where, Psal. 139. 7, -- *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the Morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.* In the same manner we might offer Proof of the Reality of the Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Mercy and Patience of the Divine Being, and all His other Moral Perfections.

III. *The Two Witnesses agree with respect to the Unity of the Divine Being.* That there is but One GOD, this may be Proved by Reason from the Perfection of His Nature. If there could be Two or more Beings, each by himself Absolutely Perfect, they must be either of the same or of different Natures. Of the same they can-

* See Wollaston Relig, Natur.

not be, because both being Perfect with the same kind of Perfection, they would be the same and be but One. Nor can they be of different or contrary Natures, for then things of the same Nature would be of contrary Natures, which is a contradiction.

But more particularly,

1. *This appears from the Consideration of Omnipotency.* There cannot be Two or more that are Omnipotent; for if we can suppose this, then we must suppose them to agree, or differ; if they differ and are contrary to each other, then there will be just as much Power on one side, or with one as there is with the other, which would bring it to an even Balance: As when two equal Weights are put into Scales, it is the same as if there was nothing in them. When equal Powers oppose each other, they can do nothing, and so in that respect are as nothing: So that there must be no Omnipotent Being, or but One.

2. *We may conclude from the Eternity of God that there is but One God.* If He be the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, there cannot be Two or more that are First and Last. To be First and not to be First, is a contradiction. There may be Three Persons in the Godhead, but not Three Gods.

3. *If He be Infinite, there can be but One God.* He fills Heaven and Earth, Jer. 23. 24. If all Space

be filled, there cannot be room for more of the same kind. It is to suppose a certain Space to be filled, and not to be filled. To suppose two Infinites is infinitely impossible. We might thus go on to Argue from the other Perfections or Attributes of God, which would afford us the like sure Foundation for the proof of the Unity of the Divine Being.

This we see in the Witness and Testimony of Reason; and Divine Revelation Witnesseth to the same truth; Deut. 6. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord.* Mat. 12. 32. *For there is One God, and there is none other but He.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

Objection. If it should be Objected here, That in as much as the general Consent of Mankind has been produced as a Proof of there being a God; Why may not a general Consent be as good a Proof of there being Many Gods? Many Gods have been worshipped, a multiplicity of Idols have been called Gods, acknowledged and worshipped as such. If it be a good Argument in one case, why not in the other, since mankind were not more universally agreed in worshipping a God, than they were in worshipping many false Gods?

For Answer,

(1) *This Consent is not so general as is pretended.* For the World was never without some worshippers of the One True GOD, the Maker and Governour

Governour of the Universe. And in the most prevailing times of Idolatry, the whole Nation of the *Jews*, a great, potent and flourishing People, were the worshippers of the Lord JEHOVAH ; together with such Numbers of Proselytes as joined with them : And even in the *Heathen World*, there were those who Exercised the Powers given them, and saw that the Vanities of the Heathen could not give Rain, nor were worthy the Name of Gods. They believed the Unity of the Divine Being. Of this belief was *Socrates*, and in this Faith he died, and for this truth he lost his Life. That there is one only GOD, is become at present the prevailing Opinion in the world.

(2) *We are to Consider the difference between Natural Reason and Natural Inclination.* There are strong and almost invincible Inclinations in Humane Nature, to the worship of God. How much soever Heathens were mistaken as to the Object of worship, yet they agreed that some sort of worship should be paid. We find so many things out of our reach and beyond our power so many difficulties, from which we can by no means Extricate our selves, and so many dangers to which we are Exposed and from which we cannot deliver our selves ; it is natural to us to fly for help some where : We are unwilling to let go all hope, and give up our selves a prey to despair ; therefore cast about for

for help and divine aid. Thus *Jonah's* Mariners, they followed this inclination of Nature, and were moved by this Impulse to those Applications they made, when the Wind was high, the Tempest great, and Shipwreck almost unavoidable : *Jonah* 1. 5. *Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his God. And greatly blamed Jonah for his neglect. Ver, 6. What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*

They seem'd not to be much concern'd what Object was apply'd to for help, so that they did not neglect the Duty. *Every one called upon his God* ; which is a plain Argument that this universal Consent in Religion, was more owing to the impulses and tendencies of a Reasonable Nature, than to the clear and distinct Principles of Natural Reason : For Reason always joins the Act and the Object together ; but Natural Inclinations are a blind and confused Principle of Action, which thrusts forward to Action without a clear perception of its Object ; and is much the same as the Appetite in the Body & the Passions of the Mind, which are designed by the great Author of Nature, not to direct us what to do (that is the work of Reason & wise Consideration) but to Excite us more vigorously to Action and to put us in mind that something is to be done. And therefore as men act very foolishly

foolishly who suffer themselves to be hurried away by their Appetites and Passions, without expecting the direction and government of Reason (for wisdom is profitable to direct) so do those men who follow their Natural Inclinations, without directing them to their proper Object.

This gives a plain account how the Inclinations to Religious Worship may be Natural, and yet the universal Practise of the Heathen world for so many Ages, in worshipping those things for God, which are no Gods, and in worshipping a great many false Gods, instead of One True God, be no Argument that there are many Gods, or more Gods than One : No more than that our Intemperance or Extravagant folly's of our Passions, are Reasonable and Just. As the Irregularities & Disorders we are guilty of when we give a loose to our Appetites and Passions, is for want of a due Exercise of Reason and Religion, so is all the Idolatry and Folly the World stands charged with, it is from following Natural Inclination, without the direction of Reason. There is a vast deal of mischief that ariseth from our suffering the inferior Power to usurp dominion over Reason, which should be the governing Principle. This is the source & fountain of a great deal of Evil. This is what the wise man complains of, Eccl..10.6,7 *Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich is set in a low place.*

lace. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes as servants walking upon the earth.

It was this neglect of Reason, that rendred the Heathen world inexcusable: As we may see in Rom. 1. 19, 20. *Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse.* Thus while the Heathens followed this Inclination, and neglected the Exercise of Reason, as the Apostle lets them know they might have done and ought to have done, to what an Abject state did they reduce themselves? What a mean Figure did they make when they paid Divine Honours to the most contemptible of Creatures?

Plutarch observes, That the *Egyptians* worshipped the *Scarabæus*, which is a sort of *Bugg* that breeds and feeds on Dung. Which kind of Idolatry *Moses* probably alludes to, where he speaks of the *Egyptian Idolatry*, Deut. 29. 17. Where the word rendred Idol, signifies † *Dung Gods*. As a confirmation of this Observation of *Plutarch*, Idols cut out of Stone have in these times been found in that Land, in the form and bigness of that Reptile. As this Observation reflects Light on this Text, so it leads us to a

† *Gillulim Stercoreos deos, Vid. Jun, et Trem.*

Consideration of that Remark of the Apostle's, Rom. i. 23 *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and* **CREEPING THINGS.** Thus they acted below the dignity of their Nature, *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* ver. 22.

Altho' the Heathen worshipped many Gods & mean Gods ; and altho' it became a common practise, Yet this is so far from proving what it is brought to prove, that it may rather be considered as a Proof that there is some certain supreme Divine Being : For where God has implanted an inclination, appetite or passion, we may be sure there is an Object suited to each. There is Hunger & Thirst, for which appetites there is a provision of Meat and Drink. If there be Fear, there is something to be Feared ; if Hope, there is something to be Desired or Hoped for : So if there be a natural inclination to Worship, there must be some Object to whom this Worship is to be paid. That there is a God is the voice of Reason, that there are many Gods allowed and worshipped, is either from the Corruption of Reason, or rather from its Inactivity.

IV Both Witnesses agree that this One GOD is the Supreme Governour of the Universe ; Upholds, Directs, Provides for and Governs all things. Or in other words, That there is a Divine Providence.

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The Creature is as unable to uphold it self in being, as it was to bring it self into being. As it was unable to make it self, so it is unable to provide for it self. As the Creatures were unable to give themselves the Beauty, Order & Harmony that we observe in them, so are they unable to uphold themselves in Order. *Nothing* is as unable to produce Order, as *Nothing* is unable to produce Something. The Wisdom of God is with the creature to govern it, as Power was with it to make it or give it a being. This his government is Moral, Natural, & Judicial. Moral Government is God's Governing intelligent beings by Laws suited to their Nature. He must therefore Know and Search the Heart. And as there is no heart that He searches not, so there is no heart but He governs. The Natural World is no less under His Government. He exerciseth a special Government over His Church; Which may be compared to *Ezekiel's Wheels*, in which there was *a Wheel within a Wheel*. He is the grand Parent of the World, and He provides for and governs the whole Family of the World. He orders all things after the best Manner, and directs them to the best End.

As He alone has an intire View of the whole Creation, and Knows every thing & Sees every thing as it is; Knows all their Powers, Principles and Properties. He alone can and doth Govern.

Thus

Thus Divine Revelation gives in the same Testimony : He exerciseth a Universal Dominion, Psal. 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord ye his Angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his Hosts, ye Ministers of his that do his pleasure.* The highest and greatest are under His Dominion. It is by Him that Kings Reign. He sets up and pulls down Kings and Kingdoms. All depend upon Him for supply and support : He openeth his Hand and supplieth the Wants of every living thing. The Apostle saith, Act. 17. 26 *He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Ver. 28. For in him we live, move, and have our being :* And he adds as agreeable to the light of Nature and the sentiments of the Heathen, as their own Poets had said, *For we are also his Off-spring.*

Our SAVIOUR also saith, Mat. 10. 29, 30 *Are not two Sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father: But the very hairs of your head are all numbred.*

This His Providence and Rule is not only Universal, but it is also Perpetual and without End : Dan. 4. 3. *How great are his signs ! and how mighty are his wonders ! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from genera-*

tion to generation. This is not only a well Attested truth, but it is a Comfortable Truth. Psal 97. 1. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice: Let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof.*

V. *Both Witnesses agree that this One GOD and Sovereign RULER is to be Worshipped.* When we consider Him as GOD over all, and Rich unto all that call upon Him; when we consider Him as a GOD of all possible Perfections; as cloath'd with Immortality, and Light as with a garment; as worthy of Adoration and Worship; as a Being on whom we depend, and from whom we derive all that we have & are; the GOD of our Life and the length of our Days: When we consider Him as the Supreme Governour over all, and kindly providing for all; who opens his bountiful Hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing: When we consider the inclination of Nature, can we think it any other than Reasonable that we should Worship Him in the best manner that we can? The Obligations we are under to this, and the Reasonableness of it, will farther appear, from a consideration of the nature of Worship in general.

If we take it in its largest Extents, as it is expressive of the Regard we have to the Divine Being, it consists in these Three things,

I. *The*

1. *The inward Affections and Dispositions of our Minds.*

2. *The Expression of this Affection by our Mouths.*

3. *By the Actions of our Life.*

1. *We Worship Him in the Inward Affections of our Minds, when we have impressed upon them a belief of His Being, Attributes and Moral Perfections. That He is a Being of Himself; that He hath Life in Himself, Joh 5. 26. And that He is for Himself; that he is Infinite, Eternal, Omnipotent, Wise, and only Wise, Holy, Just and Good. We are to believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. If these Truths are more than meer matter of Knowledge or Speculation floating in our minds, but are so believed as to sink deep into our hearts, regulate and influence our Lives; dispose us to set our selves as in the light of his Countenance; awe us with a belief of his Divine Majesty and Perfections, so as to fear lest we should Offend Him. Who can think of Him and not admire his Excellencies? Who can think of his Immensity, Eternity, Immutability, and his other incommunicable Attributes, and not Adore him? Who can think of these Perfections, and not be greatly Humbled before him? Can we Name his Goodness, Patience, Power, Wisdom; the Advantages of which we Experience every day,*

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day, and his loving Kindness which is better than Life, and not love him, fear him, trust in him, and call upon our Souls and all that is within us to bless his Name ?

This is Internal Worship ; and to the Reason of the thing, we may add the Divine Testimony, very agreeably hereunto, Mat. 22. 37. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.*

Again ; Can we consider him as Supreme Ruler and Governour of the Universe ; who hath defended us from impending Dangers, provided for us and supplied our Necessities, enriched us with the blessings of his Goodness, prevented us with his Mercy ; has laid for us the lines of our Habitations, and has given us a goodly Heritage ? We are to acknowledge Divine Providence in the manifestations of it ; not ascribing to Nature, Fortune or Chance, that which belongs to GOD alone. When we say, That this or that is the work of Nature, we must mean things being acted by those Laws & Rules that the great Governour and Director of the World has fixed for a Rule in the case. We say Nature produceth after its Kind. Every Plant bearing seed after its Kind, was the fixed Law of the Creator. When we speak of Nature, Fortune, Chance, and the like, we must mean Divine Providence, or else

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set up Idols of our Inventions, or rather use Words that have no meaning at all.

If there be then a Divine Providence, as we have shewed, there is a necessity of Divine Worship. Is He Supreme Governour & Director? Should we not then submit to his Disposal, be patient under Afflictions, be thankful for Benefits and Deliverances, and trust in him for Deliverance; hope in him for Supplies, and cast our Care upon him who careth for us? Who will bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and make all things to work together for good to those that confide in Him. When black Clouds are drawn over us, when his way is in the Whirlwind; when the Heathen rage and the People imagine a vain thing, we may then comfort our selves with this, That He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh at them, He that sitteth upon the Floods shall and will bring all things to an happy Issue

And thus having spoken of Inward Worship, that is that Internal Regard we bear towards God in the *Affections of our Minds*, we come,

2. To consider, *The Obligations we are under to Worship Him with our Mouths*. If God be, as has been proved, we do not consider him, nor treat him as he is, nor consider our selves as we are, if we do not Worship him with our Mouths. If we have inward Affection, there will be outward

ward Expression: Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If we think highly of Him, we ought to speak so too. There are Two ways whereby we Worship God with our Mouths, which we shall now speak of.

(1) *We Honour God with our Mouth, when we witness a good Profession, and confess our Belief of Him and his Truths before Men.* For if God be, as he has been prov'd to be, we should not only Worship him with the Affections of our Mind, but honour him before Men, and promote the Knowledge of him & his Truths in the world. This we should do, how hurtful so ever it may be to our Temporal Interest: For we cannot deny Him & his Truths, without being guilty of the greatest Falshood.

And as it is agreeable to Reason and Justice, to Represent things as they are; and not by our denial to Represent them as they are not: So we find the same thing Required by our SAVIOUR himself, Mat. 10. 32 *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* Nay, if we should not deny him, but were ashamed of him, this would be a fault. But more particularly to the present case, is that, Rom, 10. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

(2) *We*

(2) *We Worship & Honour Him with our Mouth when we pay Him that Service, which in common speaking is called Religious Worship.* As when we Pray unto him, and take upon us to speak unto the Lord, who are but dust and ashes. When we pray unto him, praying aid & help in time of need, for supplies in time of want; for defence in time of danger; for conduct and direction in time of difficulty; for the forgiveness of our Sins; for victory and conquest over our Enemies; and for all those good things we want both for our selves and others. As also when we render Thanks to him for the blessings of goodness, and Benefits we receive at His hands. And when we Sing his Praises and tell of his wonderful Works, and wait upon him as becomes his Servants.

(3) And lastly, *When we Worship him in all the Actions of our Lives.* For if we Worship him only in Words, it is but a solemn Hypocrisy. We should seek to know his Will, and do it. We should yield to him a sincere, chearful & universal Obedience: So shall we not be ashamed when we have respect to all his Commandments. We should attend upon Him in all the Duties of Religion, and walk in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. We should aim at his Glory in all the common transactions of our Lives: 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all*

to the glory of God. We have no true Affection to him in our hearts, nor do we Worship him in spirit and in truth, if there be not this Regularity of our conduct : This will be the best evidence of our Sincerity, and the greatest honour we can do our selves. To Obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Rams.

There being a God of all possible Perfections, as has been shewed ; both Reason & Divine Revelation agree, that he should be Worshiped in a most sincere and devout manner.

VI. *Both Witnesses agree that there is a Real and Unalterable difference between Moral Good & Evil.* The difference between Moral good & evil, is more than what consists in Name, or mens notions of things ; Nor doth this difference arise from Custom, Education, or Humane appointment, but from the Essential and Eternal difference that there is in the Things themselves. There is as Real a Difference between Moral good and evil, as there is between Natural good & evil. No man thinks there is no difference between Pain & Pleasure, between Health and Sicknes, or Fulness and Want ? For no Affliction for the present is joyous but grievous. What ever good may arise from it, is not originally from its nature, but is adventitious. It is the voice of Reason, that Truth and Falshood are opposite in their

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own nature; Justice and Injustice, Kindness and Cruelty, Pride and Humility, Patience & Impatience differ from each other in their own nature: And he that by word or deed, would confound the nature of these things, doth as good as say there is no difference between these things; that Vertue and Vice are the same.

Revelation not only concurs with Reason, but even denounceth a Wo against those that would destroy this difference so opposite in their natures; For hereby they would subvert all Order and destroy all Religion. Isa. 5. 20. *Wo to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* As darkness and light, bitter and sweet are contrary to each other, so is Moral good & evil. These contraries are made use of to represent Good and Evil, Joh. 3. 19. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, ---* Vertuous persons are said to be Children of the Day; and Vice is called the unfruitful works of Darkness, which we should Reprove.

There are Two ways by which men ordinarily go about to confound the Notions we have of the difference between good and evil.

I. *By making their own Inclinations, corrupt Desires & Interest, the only rule & measure of judging*

what is good and evil. What ever therefore is pleasing to their sensual Appetite, or serveth their worldly Inclination, that they call good, let it be never so contrary to what is truly just & good. This they will allow, pursue & indulge themselves in, as real good. What affords present Profit or Pleasure; that is, it not called good, yet is sought for as a good thing: What they dislike and have an aversion to, that by them is neglected, and hated as evil. Good, either real or supposed, is the Object of desire; and Evil is the Object of aversion. When we see men live in a way of Evil, they practically call that evil, good. It is not the Atheist only who destroys the difference between good and evil, but men that pretend to more just notions of things. So far as men live & act by this Rule, and make their Carnal Desires the measure of judging, so far they are guilty of the Prophet's charge, (*Isa 5. 20.*) When *Jonah's* Passions were above his Reason and Piety, he saith, *It is good for me to be angry to Death,* *Jonah 4. 9.* The wicked Husbandmen thought it good to kill the Heir, that the Inheritance might be theirs.

2. *Another way of confounding the true notion of Vice and Vertue, or of calling good evil, and evil good, is by a change of Names.* This is an old approved and long practised method of those that have laboured in this cause.

Names

Names are only certain Signs or Marks that men have agreed upon to be used to distinguish one thing from another. So that instead of the Name that any thing bears, it might have had a name quite different ; and it would have done as well, as the Name it now bears. But when any thing has a Name by which we know it from another thing, then for particular Persons to change these Names ; take the Name of one thing and put it upon another thing of a contrary nature, is to render Speech useless and all Language insignificant.

Names ordinarily do not spring from the Nature of things ; but are given at pleasure, by common consent ; and therefore consequently there is nothing good or evil in Names : Yet when a Name has been long used to signify any certain Vertue or good thing, when that Name is named, there goeth with it the notion of that good thing which it has so long used to signify, and cannot be presently separated. When Evil has the Name of Good, and Vice the Name of Vertue, any vice or evil with this borrow'd Name, is like a Wolf in Sheeps-cloathing, it may deceive for a while and do much harm. The Voice indeed is *Jacob's*, but the Hands are *Esau's*.

Thus men call Covetousness good Husbandry ; Debauchery, Prophaness and Idleness is called by the name of good Fellowship, good Humour,

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Humour, and a sociable Temper. Unchastity goes by the Name of Gallantry, and Lust by the name of Love.

And on the contrary, Sincerity & Uprightness is called Singularity, and true Zeal is call'd Hypocrisy.

It is a thing universally allowed, although but seldom practised, *viz.* That Private Interest must give place to the Publick Good; and the good of particular persons must yield to that of the whole. He that acts upon these Principles, is in high Esteem, has a shining & amiable Character, and stands in an advantageous Light; this is what is called *Publick spirit*: And the person that governs himself by this Rule, is a *Publick spirited man*. To make such an one, there is required such an assemblage of Vertues as renders the persons of such a spirit truly Venerable. For there is in the composition, Justice, Charity, true greatness of Mind, and a laudable Self-love; and therefore no wonder if much of this is pretended to, when nothing of it is really intended. Oh! for the *they say* Publick mens private Interest, their Ambition, Pride, Covetousness, nay, their very Revenge, Envy and Hatred, goes under this Name. Sounds are instead of Sense, and Names serve for Things, till the thin disguise is seen through and it appears that men have been calling good evil, and evil good; have put
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light for darkness, and darkness for light ; and wo to them that do so.

By the way, It makes much for the honour and credit of Vertue and Goodness, that bad men, who have no true love to it, yet to carry on their wicked designs, they are obliged to dissemble their Vices, and pretend to those Virtues which they can lay no claim to. For as bad as the World is, Bare-fac'd-wickedness will so far discredit a man and his designs, that he cannot long succeed in them. A Knave is obliged to pretend to Honesty ; and so to compass his design, will call evil good, and good evil.

VII. *Both Witnesses agree, that in Men there is Universal Depravity of Nature, and Corruption of Manners.* This is what the Heathens were sensible of and made it a Subject of frequent Complaint ; Yet could not account for it ; had various Conjectures about it : And although there was nothing they were more certain of, than this Depravity and general Corruption, yet there was nothing they were more uncertain about, as the Cause of it.

But Revelation has given light in the affair. Rom. 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man Sin entred into the world, and Death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Ver. 18. *Therefore as by the Offence of one, judgment came upon*

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upon all men to condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of Life. From within, out of the heart, proceeds Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, Fornications; A Root of Bitterness within springing up, brings forth gall and wormwood. We are bent to Sin; have corrupted our ways, So that if God should make us as Miserable, as we have rendred our selves Sinful, our case would be deplorable. If God should be strict to mark our Iniquities, who could stand before Him?

VIII. Both Witnesses agree, that there are Rewards and Punishments to be Expected. That is, That those that do Well, shall receive Rewards; and those that do ill, must expect to meet with deserved Punishments.

Our Reason infers it from these following particular heads of Argumentation.

1. We conclude it from the nature of Moral good and evil. That there is a vast difference in the Nature of these things, we have shewed already.

2. We conclude it from the nature of Government in general, and GOD's Government in particular.

3. From the general Expectation of Men; their Fears when they have done ill, and Hopes when they have done Well.

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X. *We conclude it from the nature of good and evil.* That which ariseth from the nature of good & evil, is what we call, Natural Rewards and Punishments.

We may conclude there are Rewards and Punishments, from the nature of good and evil. Intemperance carries with it some part of its own Punishment: It destroys a man's Reputation, it wasts his Substance, consumeth his Time, destroys his Constitution; and in time breaks the intellectual Powers, and brings such ruins upon the noblest faculties of the Mind, as renders a man far more insupportable than one that is naturally foolish: The wise man speaks of the miseries that are the attendants & consequences of this Vice, Prov. 23 29, 30. *Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine.*

So they that speak Falsely and are known to do so, will immediately have this Punishment, Not to be believed when they speak True, if it is their desire and interest to be believed.

So he that is Idle brings himself to want & contempt. The slothful is cloath'd with rags. He that is Temperate, just in his Dealings, true to his Word, diligent in his Business, he will find the advantages of it. So in this sense

it was that the Heathens said, That Vertue carried with it its own Reward.

This is the natural tendency of Vertue and Vice ; Yet sometimes Vertue is run down, and Vice is triumphant : The righteous are plagued every day, while the wicked flourish like the green Bay-tree.

2. *We may conclude there are Rewards and Punishments, from the nature of Government in general, and GOD's Government in particular.* To suppose a Government without Laws, is to entertain a notion contrary to the very nature of Government : And to suppose Laws without Penalties ; that there is no Reward to the Obedient, no Punishment for Offenders, doth deface the just and natural notion we have of Government, any kind whatsoever. Hope & Fear are the great springs of Action : So that where there is nothing to be feared in case of Disobedience, nor nothing to be hoped for in case of Obedience and a reward of it, there all pretence of Authority and Government, is but a shadow, is vain and delusory ; and will be no more regarded than the Log in the Fable.

Government is the regulating all things under its Administration by certain Laws ; And Moral Government is the ordering of Rational beings by such Laws as are agreeable and proper to them as Intelligent Creatures. It therefore we consider the Supreme Governour

of all things, as *He is*, and man *as he is a Rational being*, we may upon the whole conclude, That as certain as there is Moral Government in the world, so certain there are Rewards and Punishments: Psal. 31. 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*

3. *We may conclude it from the general Expectation of Mankind, that there will be a Retribution of Rewards and Punishments.* This is so powerful and prevailing, that although persons may be for a time, so amused with the pleasures of Time and Sense, that their apprehensions of these things may be lessen'd, their hopes and fears much abated, Yet they cannot wholly shake them off, so but as the Apostle saith, Rom. 2. 15. *Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.* When a man has done Well, a person finds in himself a consciousness of it, accompanied with a certain pleasing Approbation; and when he has done Ill, feels the reproaches of a guilty Conscience. And sometimes where men by high-handed Transgressions have greatly inflamed their account, there follows upon it, a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation which shall devour the Adversaries.

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der to every man according to his works? Rom. 2. 6- who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality; eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath. So, 2 Cor. 5. 10. For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. As it is most certain, there is a GOD, so certain there are and will be Rewards and Punishments. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6. As the Expectation of the righteous shall not fail, so neither shall the wicked by any means escape his deserved Punishment. Neither the obscurity of the Mean, nor the grandure of the Mighty shall secure them. Rocks cannot hide, nor Mountains cover them. Rev. 6. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

IX Both Witnesses agree, that the Soul is Immortal. Or, That there is a certain Principle by which

which we think, reason, divide, and conclude, which we call the Soul; which doth not dye with the Body. There is something which the rage of Tyrants cannot destroy, which Outward accidents, or Inward diseases cannot make an End of, nor Time it self (which makes so great devastations) cannot consume.

We may conclude this,

I. From the foregoing Principles, viz. That there are Rewards and Punishments. In all wise and good Governments, Vertue must be so Rewarded, and Vice so Punished, and their Proportion so Adjusted, as to answer the design of them, and serve the true ends of Government, and the Justice of the Administration vindicated. It is true, this is but imperfectly done in all Humane Governments; There is so much Partiality, Ignorance and Passion, seen and felt, that we do herein fall very much short of absolute Perfection: But in Divine Government, under the Influence & Direction of a Just, Wise and Righteous Governour of the Universe, it may be expected and must be supposed. Now in the present state of things, in the present situation of affairs, we find, that many times good men have their Evil things, and bad men have an Affluence of good things. Good men have so many Crosses & Cares; so many Sorrows, and so many Afflictions; they groan

groan under Persecutions, or carry about with them a distempered Body, an afflicted Mind ; their Name sullied by slanders, and their Fame darkned by envious detractors ; are accounted the Off-scouring of all things, wandering about in Sheep-skins & Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented : of whom the world was not worthy : They wandered in Deserts, and in Mountains, in Dens, and Caves of the earth ; so that if they had hope only in this life, they were of all men most Miserable. While at the same time the wicked enjoy great Tranquility ; their heart is fat as grease ; they flourish like the green Bay-tree ; and are not plagued like other men.

As this, for a time, was a difficulty to the holy Psalmist, so it has been often offer'd as an Objection against the Justice, Wisdom and Goodness of Providence : Nay, some have Question'd whether there was any Providence or no. But when we consider men as having immortal Souls, fitted for another State and a Coming world ; where *Lazarus* shall be comforted, and *Dives* be tormented ; When Rewards & Punishments shall be justly dispensed ; and all things which look'd so wrong here, shall then & there be set right : Those that have Suffered here, shall Reign there ; and by how much the more they have patiently Suffered here, so much the more shall they be Glorified then : There shall

shall they Rejoice, according to the days wherein they have been Afflicted; this scatters and dispels all the Clouds that seem'd for a time to be round the Throne of the Divine Majesty ; and resolveth all the Doubts that might otherwise arise, with respect to the Unequal distribution of good and evil things in the world.

2. *The immortality of the Soul may be concluded from the general Consent of Mankind in owning this Truth.* This has been the Opinion not only of the Learned, but of the Illiterate. It is the Opinion of Nations, how different so ever they are in their Humours, Customs, Education, Manners and Laws ; how distant so ever they are from each other as to Place, or remote from each other as to Time; yet they agree in this, that there is something that doth not die, something that will subsist after this present life is at an End. The original Inhabitants of *this Land*, who were almost the farthest removed of any People from all that might be called Learning or Improvement ; having their Understandings darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them because of the Blindness of their hearts ; yet it seem'd to be their settled Opinion and Expectation, That after a well-spent Life, they should go to a warm & distant Country, where they should live more happily than
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in this Life. Their Understandings were uncultivated, and their Notions in many things very much confused, yet this of a future State seem'd to prevail and be uppermost in their thoughts. This was also the Opinion || of the wiser and learned Heathen. *Socrates saith, If Death be the Extinction of the whole, this will be good News for the Wicked, that they have nothing to Suffer.*

Another makes this wise Remark, *If the Soul when we die Perisheth, it is not easie to discern how good men can be Happy, who receive no fruit of their Vertue here, but often perish by it.* We have not only his Opinion, but also a good Reason for it.

It may be said, *That if the Consent of Mankind be advanced as so good an Argument, then the Errors that Mankind have run into, may be supported by the same Argument; and consequently prove Falshood to be Truth.*

This Consent to Error has not been so general as is pretended; or if it were, yet it is not a Consent of the Wisest; or it has been the result of Passion more than Reason; or has lasted but a little while. Errors like Shadows, when they come to be Examined flee away; or are found to be nothing, while Truth like Substance will bear Examination. Rocks stand fast, while Mountains of Ice melt and consume

|| *Socrates in Phæd pag. 80. Dionis: Halicar.*

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away. This is the state of Truth and Falsehood ; Error may triumph for a while, but Truth which is eternal, will prevail at last.

3. *We may conclude that the Soul is Immortal, from the Strong, Lasting & Universal Desire of FAME.* Men desire to leave behind them a great and good Name to the latest Posterity. Nay, rather than fail, men will seek for Fame by Infamy, As *Erostratus* did by burning the famous Temple of *Ephesus*. Some seek to perpetuate their Name by their Writings, some by their Conquests & Extensive Power, although Thousands are made Miserable by it, and they wade through a Sea of Blood to accomplish it. Some seek it by their fine Buildings, which often is more to the Credit of the Workman, than the Founder. Some seek to establish their Fame and perpetuate their Name by Pillars, Statues, Monuments and Tombs ; Such were the Pyramids of *Egypt*, the Tomb of *Perseus*, the Pillar of *Trajan* ; as also that of *Absalom*, of which we read well to our present purpose, 2 Sam. 18. 18. Now *Absalom* in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself a Pillar in the kings dale : for he said, I have no Son to keep my name in remembrance ; and he called the Pillar after his own name, and it is called to this day, *Absalom's place*.

This is one Reason of mens earnest desire of Children ; and particularly of such who may bear up their Names : And for the same Reason

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men too often seek to make themselves Rich & Great, rather than Good. Do not men, many times, while they pretend care to provide for their Children, only consult their own Fame & seek their own Grandure? We have to this purpose this desire of Fame, represented in a strong light, Psal. 49. 11. *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.* Ver. 18. *This their way is chosen*, yet their posterity approve their sayings. *Selah.* That is, they seek to perpetuate their Names in the same manner.

Presuming upon the strength of this mighty Principle, an *Eastern Nation*, Subject to an Absolute Prince, for their security against Unbounded Power and Lawless Dominion, have wisely contrived this method; An Office is Erected, and Persons Appointed to Record all the Misconduct and Male-administration of the Reign, and deposit it in a place or room, not to be opened till the Line of that Family is Extinct; and then to be published to the World. This gives a check to Exorbitant Power. Concern about a future Fame, restrains this State-Leviathan within some Rules of Moderation, which it could not do, were not the Foundations of this † Principle laid very deep in our

† See *Le Comp. Hist. China.*

Nature. If our Soul die with the Body, and with it crumble into common dust, and be no more, why should we be concerned what the World will say of us? We might say, Let us eat & drink, for to morrow we shall die & shall not be affected with Praise nor Dispraise, if all consciousness die with us, if all sense of things when we cease to be here; then if the Soul be not Immortal, we can give no Account of our selves, nor Answer for that propensity of our Nature and those anxious Cares about a future Fame. If we seek Reputation and a Name by those ways and means that can afford us no sure well-grounded, or lasting foundation for it, the desire will prove the truth of the Principle; Misplacing our hopes will only argue our Ignorance, lowness of Spirit, Mistake, or Corruption.

4. *The Capacity of the Soul, and Progress that it makes in Knowledge, is an Argument of its Immortality.* It is capable of taking in much at one View; and is desirous still of more Knowledge. The more the Mind is improved, the more the Faculty is enlarged: The more we know, the more our capacity and inclination for Knowledge is increased. When Children come into the world, unexperienced and strangers to every thing, how manifest is their daily growth in Knowledge? More visible then, but not greater than in other parts of Life. Thus an improved

Mind makes a continual progress, from knowledge to knowledge; and is capable of it through all the Ages of Eternity. It is a shining Light that shines more and more unto a perfect Day. It is not so with the Brutal part of the Creation. Beasts not only soon grow up to their full Size, but also to the utmost of their Capacity.

The Design of Creation in their frame and make, is but a short and subordinate state of Life, they soon arrive to the Perfection of their Nature, then come to a full stand, and make no farther progress; They go thus far, and no farther. But the Mind of man makes continual Advances in Knowledge, both by Reason and Experience. It is large in its desires and designs; and consequently lasting in its Nature. This progression of the Soul, is an argument of its Immortality. Can it be supposed, That the Mind of man should be made in this manner to no purpose? That he be made with such extensive Faculties, without proportionable Opportunities, and proper Objects for their Improvement and Entertainment? Is he fitted for an Eternal World, and must he end with Time? Are all these Powers made to be hid in the Earth and buried in the Grave?

Divine Revelation bears witness to the same Truth, and discovers it with much more clearness than Reason has done; Rom. 2. 7. --- *Immortality; Eternal Life,* 2 Tim. 1. 10. --- *Who bath*

hatb abolished Death, and hatb brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel.

X. And lastly, Both Witnesses agree in the Certainty and Universality of Death. There is scarce any Truth, let it be never so plain ; let it be of never so great importance, and well proved, but has been Denied, or called in Question one time or another, Except this, That all sooner or later must Die. As to this, many Live as if they did not believe it ; at least they put the Evil Day far from them ; Neither think of it, nor provide for it, any more than if it were not true ; though nothing is more certain. Job 30.23 *I know that thou wilt bring me to Death, and to the house appointed for all Living.* This is almost the only Un-disputed Truth : Which doubtless men would call in Question, as well as other important Articles, if not confronted by undeniable Experience.

As Reason teacheth this, so Divine Revelation agrees with it and witnesseth the same, Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to Die ; but after this the Judgment.*

In the same manner might be Proved our Obligation to all Personal, Relative and Social Duties ; As Sobriety in our Behaviour, Justice and Charity to our Neighbour, Obedience to Prince, and Parents, and Piety to GOD,

But

But we pass on to those Articles of our Faith that are purely and in a strict sense matter of Divine Revelation ; Such as the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, His Holy Life, Mighty Works, Painful Death, His Merits, Sacrifice of Himself, Satisfaction, and Powerful Intercession that He makes for us ; and His sending His Holy Spirit the Comforter, to lead us into all Truth. Also the Doctrine of the Resurrection ; His Positive Institutions, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

As these and the like are in a strict sense matter of Revelation : Reason and Revelation having each their distinct Province, we are not to look upon these, coming within the compass of our Reason, either to discover or comprehend them.

Revelation may be Considered, Either,

I. *As an Illustration and setting in a clearer Light those Principles of Natural Religion, which though we know, yet our Knowledge is but Confused, Imperfect and Indistinct, by reason of the Fall, subsequent Prejudices, Indolence and Ignorance.* When such Revelation is made, our Reason comprehends it and makes it our own ; in the same manner as we find some Truths cannot be found out by men of mean Capacity, while others of larger Abilities and stronger Faculties, are able to Discover and Explain them to those of weak Capacity,

capacity, So that what was Incomprehensible to them, and out of the reach of their Faculties, is now well understood by them, and becomes as really their own, as if they had found it out themselves and master'd it by the strength of their own Understandings.

2. *We may consider Revelation as a Discovery of that, of which we could have no Notion, but as is it Revealed.* Of this kind are those Articles of Faith that have been ^{but} now mentioned. Therefore when men say that Revelation is but an inforcing the Law of Nature, a Reviving of it, and only a new Edition of the Law of Nature: If they mean by what they say, Revelation in the first sense, or the first sort of Revelation, their Notion is right; but if they mean and intend the second sort, to say no worse of it, it seems to me to be a great Mistake.

Upon what has been now offered, it may look as if the pretention to prove the Articles of our Faith by Two Witnesses, will fall to the ground; that Reason can give no farther Testimony, and be of no farther use to us. What has been offered being allowed, Yet we shall find Reason a good Witness still.

(1) *Reason gives in Evidence, that those Doctrines above mentioned, which are purely matter of Divine Revelation, cannot be proved False.* Men of corrupt minds raise Objections against those Articles

articles and cavil at them; propose many Questions about them, and give many dark Hints, raise many Scruples about them; Nay, and sometimes boldly Deny them: But yet have never been able to prove them False. When all that has been offer'd in opposition to these Truths comes to be weigh'd in the Balance of Reason, *Mens Tekel* is written upon it; they are found wanting.

2d Reason, or Natural Light Testifieth, that these Articles, as they cannot be proved False, so farther, that they are True and highly Reasonable. If by Reason we can prove these Articles to be True; to be Reasonable, then both Witnesses agree in their Testimony, as well as they did in the Articles of Natural Religion.

But it may be said, *That if these Doctrines are Incomprehensible and above Reason, though not contrary to Reason; how then can we Judge whether they are Reasonable, or Unreasonable? Of that which is Incomprehensible we can form no Judgment from the Nature of the thing. For how can we Judge that to be Reasonable, of which we cannot Judge at all?*

This is very true; Yet we may, if not from the Nature of the thing, yet from other Principles, argue the Truth and Reasonableness of things. For instance; We cannot comprehend how the Load Stone points the Needle to the North.

North. Though this Vertical Power be Incomprehensible to us, yet we are sure of the Truth of it; and that there is a Reason in Nature for so strange & wonderful an Effect.

So these Doctrines, though Incomprehensible, Yet if it can be proved by Reason, that it is a Revelation of GOD, who is a GOD of Truth; who neither Deceiveth, nor is Deceived, we act then very Reasonably, when we believe Truths so Revealed: Nay, should act very Unreasonably, if we do not give full Credit to them.

That GOD has Revealed these things to be so, and given us Evidence and Proof of this Revelation's being from GOD, we must judge of these Proofs by our Reason.

[1] *One Evidence of a Revelation's being from GOD, is, That the thing Revealed be agreeable to the Principles of Natural Religion, and other parts of Divine Revelation.* If any pretend to be sent from GOD, and Reveal something as a Divine Truth, and this be contrary to an antecedent Revelation, or contrary to the light of Nature or any Principle of Natural Religion; we may conclude it comes not from GOD. We have this Rule given us, Deut. 13. 1, 2, 3. *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder: And that sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, (which thou hast*

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not

not known) and let us serve them: Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Idolatry is contrary to the Laws of Natural Religion, and contrary to preceding Revelation; So that such a Pretender, valuing himself never so much upon the Success of his prediction, yet ought to be Rejected. Such an one might prove our Obedience, and exercise our Judgment; but ought by no means to stagger our Faith.

We are called upon to try the Spirits; As *1 Joh. 4. 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* Believe not every Spirit; that is, Not every pretender to the Spirit, but try them; see if they have the Spirit. It was one Character of the true Messiah, That he Baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire, *Mat. 3. 11.* There should be such an Effusion of the Holy Spirit, whose Operations would be such, as would Evidence the truth of what they preached, that Jesus is the true Messiah; and so convince the world of Sin in rejecting him. *1 Cor. 12. 3. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

Ghost. That is, he cannot say it in a Convincing * manner, but by the Holy Ghost. Any man may speak the word ; but it was only by the special Gifts of the Holy Ghost that they could so Effectually evidence & prove it. In the Exercise of our Reason we judge of these things and make this tryal ; So that in this we need our Reason ; which bears Witness to the Truth of the Divine Revelation.

[2] *Another Evidence of the Holy Scriptures being a Divine Revelation, is the Prophecies contained in the Bible ; which are very Numerous.* If there were only one, or two, the Argument would not be so strong. A pretence to Prophecie, might in a single Instance by chance be fulfilled. A *Dream* or a *Wonder*, might happen to come to pass : But that Prophecies so Numerous, & so long before the Event, should all and every one of them be so punctually fulfilled, is a good Proof of that Book which contains them, being from God.

They are not only Numerous, but they are very Particular ; Even to the very Name of any certain person improved, as an Instrument in bringing about the Event prophesied of and foretold ; 1 King. 13, 2. *And he cried against the Altar in the name of the Lord, and said, O Altar, Altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a Child*

* See *Whitby* in Loc.

shall be born unto the house of David, *Josiah* by Name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and mens bones shall be burnt upon thee. This was accomplished by a Reforming King of that Name.

The like we have of *Cyrus*, long before he was born; *Isa.* 44. 28. That saith of *Cyrus*, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to *Jerusalem*, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. This was accomplished, as we see, *Ezra* 1. 2, 3.

These Prophecies, they have been Remarkable for their Accomplishment, let them be never so great and awful. Such was the Destruction of *Babylon*, of *Tyre*, and *Jerusalem*. Of *Babylon*, the Prophet speaks of it as the glory of Kingdoms and beauty of the Chaldees, *Isa.* 13. 20. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, || neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. (Its Ruins being so full of Serpents, that none can come nigh.) Ver. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall ly there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And it still continues in Ruins. The present *Babylon*, or *Bagdat*, being distant from it and on the other side of the *Tygris*. And the re-

|| See *Prideaux Hist. Con.*

markable

markable Good & glorious Things foretold by Prophecy, concerning CHRIST, His Coming and Kingdom, so magnificently described by the Prophets have been Completed in the fulness of Time ; as might be proved by a cloud of Witnesses. The Prophecie of *Jacob* concerning the Sceptre, or Government resting on *Judah* till *Shiloh*, or the Messiah should come : As also *Daniel's* Weeks, so compleatly finished, are such Evidences that the *Jews* are not able to elude the force of them. They find themselves a People without Temple, or Sacrifice ; without any Country of their own ; without Government ; without any fixed Habitation ; Scorned and Despised : Which is a standing and present Proof of the Religion we Profess, as being from GOD.

[3] *Another Evidence of a Revelation's being from GOD, are the Miracles wrought for its Confirmation.* And these are Numerous and Various ; and of such a Nature, and so well Attested, as puts the matter in a very clear light. When *John* sent his Disciples to JESUS, saying, Art thou He that should come, or look we for another ? Luk. 7. 22. *Jesus* answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell *John* what things ye have seen and heard, how that the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, to the Poor the Gospel is preached. He refers to those Works as

a sufficient Proof of His Mission; and therefore gives no other Answer. Nor did He look on it as needful to use any other Argument. The Works being of such a Nature, and anciently Prophesied of as Works to be done by the Messiah when He should appear-

When the *Jews* came to JESUS, and asked Him to tell them, if He were the CHRIST or not; Joh. 10:25. *Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witness of me.* The Restoring sight to those born Blind, and Raising a dead body to Life, was such a Work as none ever pretended to but as a Work of GOD; Not to be done by any Humane Skill or Art, or by the help of Infernal Spirits.

But above all, that Miraculous Gift of Tongues, with which the Apostles & Disciples were indued, was an Evidence so very Extraordinary, if we consider it in all its Circumstances, that it much exceeded all others. It is probable, that to this Miraculous Gift, our SAVIOUR refers; where He saith, Joh. 14:12 *Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the Works that I do, he shall do also, and greater Works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* And consequently would send the Holy Ghost according to His Promise.

It was very Remarkable on many Accounts.

First,

First, The matter of Fact was very certain, It is beyond dispute that the Apostles had the Miraculous gift of Tongues Act. 2. 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was a Gift, and not obtained by Skill and Industry. We have the Testimony of very Enemies for the Proof of it. They looked on them as Illiterate men. They said of JESUS, Joh. 7. 15. *How knoweth this Man Letters, having never learned?* The same thing for substance, they testify of the Apostles. As in Act. 2. 7, --- They say, *Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans?* And how hear we every man in our own Tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus & Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Profelytes, Cretes and Arabians. This was the cause of their wonder, That Unlearned men should speak such a Variety of Tongues. Some that heard words which they did not understand, they mocked, and said, *These men are full of new wine:* But the people whose Language they spake, were Evidences to this. The various Nations above Named, said, ver. 11. *We do hear them speak in our Tongues, the wonderful works of God,*

Secondly

60 *Religion Supported by Reason,*

Secondly, *We consider as another thing Remarkable, the great Usefulness of this Miraculous gift.* It served to spread the Gospel : *Their sound hereby more speedily went unto all the Earth.* The Gospel was soon spread far & wide. It served both for its Promulgation, and Confirmation. The Evidence was so strong, and the Success so great, that there was that Day Three Thousand added to the Church. They flocked as Doves unto the windows.

Thirdly, *Another Remarkable thing was the Continuance of it.* This was not a transient Fact, like other Miracles ; but was as a continued Miracle. That those who made any Question, or in the least Doubted of the matter of Fact, might easily satisfy themselves. This and the other Gifts of the Holy Ghost, carried with them so much Conviction, that our SAVIOUR saith upon it, Luk. 12. 10. *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him : but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.* That which shall not be Forgiven, is the Unpardonable Sin.

And to conclude, It is the Voice of Reason, ' That the † Bible, or whole Revelation, is ' what it pretends to be. Let any one pro- ' duce any Book that pretends to be from

† See the Guardian.

GOD ; That for the Matter is so worthy
of GOD ; The Doctrines whereof are so
Useful, and Precepts so Reasonable, and Ar-
guments so Powerful ; That has so many
marks of Divinity stamp'd upon it ; The
Truth of all which has been confirmed by so
many Miracles ; The Relation of which has
been transmitted to Posterity in Publick and
Authentick Records ; Written by those that
were Eye and Ear Witneses of what they
wrote ; and free from Suspicion of any
worldly Interest or Design : When we con-
sider the Progress that it has made, without
Humane Force and against Force ; Notwith-
standing the Power of the Mighty, the Rage
of the Enemy, the Subtilty of the Cunning ;
and when Earth & Hell was combined against
it. It is strong for the pulling down the
Kingdom of Darkness. When we consider
all this, we cannot but conclude it comes from
GOD.

Thus we see what Evidence Reason gives,
even to the Truth of those Articles of our
Faith, that are purely matter of Revelation.
That is always accounted a good Evidence,
that is as good as the nature of the thing will
admit of. And although Reason in this case,
can give no direct Evidence to these Truths,
yet if it can prove these Articles are Re-
vealed of GOD ; Reason has done as well as

if it had been proved from the nature of the things themselves. And this we see Reason has done. So that we have not departed from the Proposal to prove the Truth of Religion, both by Reason and Divine Revelation. *Reason* has landed us upon a safe Shore, and put us into the hand of a sure Guide, which is an unerring Guide. As Faith and Charity, are but temporary Graces and shall cease. *Faith* shall cease in Vision, and *Hope* be swallowed up in Fruition; So when *Reason* has proved the *Revelation* to be from GOD, then (as was said in another case) *What need have we of other Witnesses?*

We come to make some *IMPROVEMENT* of the whole, and reduce all to Practice, which is the chief End and Design of all.

I. Then we may hence learn, *The Care and Kindness of a Merciful and Gracious GOD, who has Discovered things so Needful for us, and has Confirmed and Proved them to us.* He has taught us what we are to Believe, and what we are to Do; He has shewed us the way of Life, Has set before us Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, Has offered the assistance of his holy Spirit to them that ask it. He resisteth the Proud, but giveth grace to the Humble. God is ready to Receive all those that come unto him,

him, having Repentance towards God and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore might he well say, as in Isa. 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* GOD saith, *Come let us Reason together.* We are not to expect that God will use Force and Violence with us; which would confound the Nature of Vertue and Vice. We are to consider GOD as a Natural, or Moral Governour of the Universe: By Natural Government we understand his Ordering all Material and Irrational Beings by Laws suited to their Natures. By Moral Government we understand his Governing Moral Agents or Rational Beings, by Rules and Laws agreeable to their Rational Nature. If He should govern any Creature by Rules not agreeable to their Nature, it would be to treat a Creature not *as it is*; which is contrary to truth. To Reason with a Post, or use Arguments with a Stone, would be to treat it as if it had Reason, which it hath not: Or to order a Rational Being as if it had not Reason, is not to look upon things as *they are*. GOD has dealt with us as *Rational Creatures*; has said, *Shew your selves men*; He has shew'd us the Reasonableness of Religion, and the Excellency of the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, the Beauty of Holiness, and in the end the glorious *Recompence of Reward* laid up for them that love & fear Him.

II. We may hence learn, *The great Usefulness both of Reason and of Divine Revelation in Religion.* Some have thought it their duty, to depreciate and undervalue *Reason*, as not to be consider'd in Religion; have represented it as useless and dangerous. That they might do the greater Honour to Divine Revelation, by a voluntary Humility, have discarded it from any concern in Religion, and thought themselves the better Christians for doing so. Whereas it is a strong Evidence for Religion, and one of its great Supports. It is disgraced with the opprobrious Names, of *Carnal Reason*, and *Blind Reason*. If by *Carnal Reason*, they mean as the Apostle saith of Philosophy, that is, *Philosophy falsely so called*; if they mean a vain and idle pretence to Reason, a shew of it only without the substance; an appearance without the thing it self; when Quibbles are called Arguments, and confident Sophistry is called Demonstration: If men pretend to Comprehend what is Incomprehensible, and Reject what they cannot Comprehend, it is plain that this is not *Reason*, but is only its *Shadow*.

But if they mean *Reason it self* that they would Condemn, they undervalue the most noble Faculty of our Soul, slay one of the Witnesses, promote *Enthusiasm*, and deprive Religion of one grand Support.

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If on the other hand, Men will over-value their *Reason*, lay too great a stress upon it; and despise or deny all that will not come within the compass of it: they do by every Truth, as was said of *Procrustes*, That all those that were not so long as his Bed, were stretch'd to its length, and those that were too long were cut off to the same length.

This over-valuing of Reason, tends to promote Atheism, Deism and every kind of Infidelity. As *Reason* is the distinguishing Character of man, so men are vain and conceited, and think themselves to be much wiser than they are; and while they would shew themselves wise, they discover themselves to be fools. 1 Cor. I. 22, 23, 24. *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* We should have a just Value for Reason and Revelation. Let not these which God has joined together, be by any man under any pretence put asunder. We should consider them both as useful in their several places.

III. Learn hence, *That Faith is no Ridiculous thing.* Some have labour'd to represent Faith, the result and product of a weak Mind. Some
unthinking

unthinking men make a jest of Believing. If you have Arguments and Reasons to offer, they will hear you, but to Believe is more fit for Women and Children, than for Men of their Wit and Penetration. They are so much afraid of being accounted Easie & Credulous, that they despise Faith as beneath them. But such men do not consider the Necessity and Usefulness of Faith in the common affairs of Life. Nay, we have no other Principle but this to act upon in the greatest concerns relating to this present Life. We come to the knowledge of things by Sense, Reason, or Faith. We know but little of our own Knowledge: We depend upon others; it is but little we can do without it. Our belief in others is that on which all Humane Commerce & Intercourse, is founded. That man that will believe nothing but what he sees with his own Eyes, and knows of his own Personal Knowledge, will make a ridiculous Figure in the world, and make but a poor Progress in the affairs of it. Men may as well deride Sense and Reason, as Faith. If Historical Faith be so proper, Saving Faith is full as reasonable and proper. Of Faith in general we have this description, Heb. 11. 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Men would render the belief of those Articles that are purely matter of Revelation,

as Ridiculous, because they are confessed to be Incomprehensible. *Of what use or advantage can such Doctrines be to us, that we own we cannot Comprehend ?*

The same Objection may be made against all Natural Religion. Natural Religion teacheth, That there is a GOD, Infinite & Eternal. This, those that despise Revelation profess to believe : Though they can no more Comprehend the Divine Essence, His Infinity or Eternity, than they can the Doctrine of the Trinity or Incarnation. Nay, the inward Nature of those things that we are most conversant about, we do not know ; And yet these Outward things are as Useful to us as if we did Know them. Our Food is as nourishing to us, as if we understood the nature of Food and Digestion. The Wind and Tide is Useful to us, though we do not understand their intrinsic Nature, or true Original. Though we know not how the Eternal Father begat an Eternal Son of His own Substance, nor how the Eternal Son became Man, yet this is the most desirable and the most useful Knowledge in the world, and the most welcom News to poor Sinners : It is the glad tidings of Peace. Joh. 3. 16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Faith has more of Value in it, than these men will
allow

allow of. If Faith be derided, or Believers contemned, it is the effect of mens Ignorance or Prejudice.

IV. *We may hence learn the Folly of Infidelity.* Infidelity consists either in a Disbelief of a Divine Being, which is called *Atheism*; or an Acknowledgment of a Divine Being, but a denial of all Revealed Religion, called *Deism*. To deny a Divine Being, and to be put to so many shifts to support the ~~legible~~ cause, is great folly, Especially when we consider how comfortable this Consideration is under heavy Afflictions, That there is a GOD to go to, to whom we may seek, and to whom we may commit our cause. As there are innumerable Evils that encompass us round, which we can neither foresee nor prevent; then to have a GOD to go to, whose Power is great, whose Compassion is great, and whose Understanding is infinite. To have a GOD to go to, who regards our Groans, who bottles our Tears, and hears our Prayers. To be thus freed from blackness of Despair, and filled with Hope and Comfort, is a great Support under the greatest Afflictions; is so agreeable to the inclinations of Nature, that if there were not a GOD, every wise and good man would wish there were. If it be not true, they would wish it were true. Psal. 14. 1. *It is a fool that saith in his heart, There is no God.* If we suppose a man Oppressed by the Violent, his

his Name blasted, and Reputation ruined by the Slanderer; his Body afflicted with some painful, strange and incurable Disease; his Estate wasted and gone, and his Friends turn'd against him; his Case miserable beyond all means and humane help: Vain is the help of Man. He looks to the Hills, but refuge fails. If then he has no GOD to go to, he is of all men most miserable. But it is otherwise with the good man, that believes there is a GOD, who sits King upon the Floods; that this GOD is an help and a present help in the time of Trouble, He casteth his Care and roul's his Way on the LORD; trusting that He will bring it to pass, and send him seasonable and sufficient help out of his holy hill of Zion. This affords him a Joy, that the Atheistical Stranger intermeddles not with.

As there is Folly in all Infidelity, so there is in *Deism*, as well as in *Atheism*.

If he be true to his Principles, he believes that there is a GOD, Holy and Just; therefore hates Sin and will punish it. He believes GOD is good; but this gives him no assurance that God will Pardon his Sins, though he Repent of it. We can know nothing by the light of Nature but this, That a merciful and good GOD will Pardon, if it be wise and just that he should do so: If it be consistent with the

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wise

wise Ends of Government to pardon a Penitent, he will do it ; but whether it be so or no, he that owns no Revelation cannot tell. A merciful God and compassionate Judge, may and ought for the good of the whole, to punish and put to death a Penitent Criminal ; the great Ends of Government call for it ; Repentance doth not Merit nor Intitle us to Pardon. But by Divine Revelation, we find that upon Repentance, we shall obtain Pardon. *Whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy.* Christ hath died and purchased this for us. Hereby the Honour of God is secured, and the Ends of Government well answered.

V. Hence learn the Danger of Infidelity & Irreligion. To dis-believe Truths well Proved ; or which is much the same, to Live as if we do not believe, though we may pretend to it, is to expose our selves to great Danger. To live without GOD in the world, when it is so Certain there is a GOD ; To live an irreligious Life, as if there was no Truth in Religion, when the Truth of it is so well Proved by Two Witnesses ; As it is an Aggravation of our Guilt, so it is very Dangerous, Exposing us unto the severest Punishment. If the *Jews* stood Condemned for a Violation of *Moses's* Law, how much greater will our Punishment be, who dis-believe & slight the Gospel ? Heb.

10. 26, 27, --- For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three Witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, as an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace. The Proofs offered for the Establishing and Building up our Faith, in the Gospel are so clear, so strong, and beyond contradiction, that it will be more tolerable, even for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those who Reject the Gospel, after so strong Evidences are offered for Proof of the truth of it. Mat.

11. 23. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of Judgment, than for thee. Shall not those who are despisers, wonder and perish! The Gospel of Salvation rejected, will increase our Condemnation.

Gospel-Ministers, that now in their hand hold out a Pardon, as being by God, through Christ, offered to you; if you Reject it now,

in the Great Day of the Lord, they shall hold up their hand against you.

Your own Conscience will Condemn you, and GOD who is greater than your Conscience, will be a swift Witness against you. He that made you, will have no Mercy on you, and he that formed you will shew you no Favour. Who can dwell with devouring Fire, or lie down in everlasting Burnings? What hand can be strong, or what heart can endure in the Day of the Lord's fierce Anger? Heb. 2. 3, 4. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, & was confirmed to us by them that heard him? God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own will.* Consider the Arguments contained in the words; he argues from the intrinsic Goodness and Excellency of the Blessing offered, it is a *Great Salvation*. He considers the Dignity and Excellency of the Person procuring, publishing & offering this great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the *LORD Himself*. As a farther aggravation of the Guilt and Punishment of those that neglect the great Salvation, the Apostle leads us to consider the strength and clearness of the Evidence, the number & greatness of the Proofs made use of to assure us of the truth & certainty of the Gospel; GOD also

also bearing them witness both by *Signs and Wonders, Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. So then to Reject that which in its own Nature is so Excellent, is a mark of the greatest Depravity and Corruption of Manners. To despise that, which is of the last importance to us, on the due Receiving, or on the Neglecting whereof, depends the greatest Happiness, or extremest Misery our Nature is capable of, is the greatest Folly imaginable.

To disobey the Authority of our Supreme GOVERNOUR, whose Power is Uncontrollable, is the highest Insolence; and to oppose the Will of our greatest BENEFACTOR is the greatest Ingratitude. And to withstand and not be convinced by Proofs, as both in number and strength, clearness and certainty, are as great as can in Reason be expected or desired, is the utmost Obstinacy, and most wilful Opposition to the Truth.

II. The Second USE may be by way of EXHORTATION.

1. *Let us be Exhorted to Consider well the Proofs and Evidences of the Christian Religion, as they ly before us.* Sometimes men neglect this, because they do not care to give themselves the Trouble of it, nor will take the Pains requisite thereunto: But oftener it is because they are afraid to Trust themselves; they are afraid to Think

Think and Reflect upon these things, lest Conviction should grow troublesome, and their Thought become a burthen. For this Reason it is, that men keep themselves in a continual round of Affairs, Business or Recreations: For this Reason they keep themselves in a continual Hurry; They rise up Early, and sit up Late, eat the bread of Sorrows, and keep themselves in a constant state of Perplexity. They pretend Necessity, but it is more to hide themselves from themselves. Men are afraid to be alone and think coolly on these great & important Points. They love their Sins; they love to live an Indolent Life, and to live as those that are without GOD in the world.

If we well improve our Thoughts in this way, we shall see Reason to believe the Gospel, and Embrace it, though it contain many Articles that are above our Comprehension; and shall conclude no Article Revealed and thus Proved, is Incredible because it is Incomprehensible.

In the common Affairs of life, Sense & Reason assures of the truth of many things; the nature of which we cannot Comprehend. No Article of Faith, when once well Proved, is to be Rejected, because it is above our Comprehension, any more than that we should deny the truth of those things which Sense and Reason have proved to us to be true. And it is

is as fit that upon this very account, we should Renounce our Sense and Reason, as that we should Renounce our Faith.

Let us therefore make these Considerations, the Subject of our Entertainment when we sit in the House, and when we walk by the Way. Let not the Incomprehensibleness of any Article, be any discouragement to us. We shall find many and great Advantages by it. We shall mention Two.

(1) *It will improve our Capacity, and enlarge our Faculty.* As the Members of the Body acquire strength and activity by Exercise, so the Mind equally improveth as it is imployed about proper Objects. And what can be a better Entertainment than these Considerations? which at once enlighten the Understanding and warm the Heart. It serves to make us both wiser and better. How often have fine natural Parts been lost for want of Cultivation? and have become like the Vineyard of the S sluggard, overgrown with the Briars and Thorns of Prejudice and Ignorance.

To what a mighty Heighth and Stature have mean Parts grown up to, by Diligence and Application? It serves to make a Person a bigger Man and a better Christian. The blessed Psalmist, by his happy Experience found this true, Psal. 119 98,99. *Thou through thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine Enemies, for they*

66 *Religion Supported by Reason,*

they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers: for thy Testimonies are my meditation. They were his Meditation all the day.

(2) *Let us consider these Proofs and Evidences as what will render us more capable to Defend the Truth, and Satisfy Others that may be in Doubt. When we have well satisfied our selves, and are Established upon Rational grounds, we shall be the better able to satisfy others, and oppose Gainayers. We live in an Age of free Thinking, free Speaking, and I think may add, of free Living too. Sacred Truths are boldly struck at; Revelation is in this Day derided; Faith built upon the most solid Foundations, is represented as meer Enthusiasm. Miracles, though never so well Attested, are turned into Ridicule. Those Perilous times are come, when men are heady, high-minded, lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of GOD. There are those that Endeavour to sap the Foundations of all Religion and Vertue. Ungodly Men, turning the Grace of GOD into Lasciviousness, denying the only LORD GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Therefore we had need gird up the Loyns of our Minds, get our Hearts Established in the Truth; That as the Apostle saith, 1 Pet. 3. 15, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a Reason of the hope that is in you with meekness & fear.*

2 Let

2. *Let us live up to those Truths which we profess to Believe.* Let it appear that there is a wide difference between Believers and Infidels. Not only in Doctrine, but in Practice also. It will be no Advantage to us that we have Believed well, if we Live ill. Let it appear that we have not received the grace of the Gospel in vain. We are Redeemed that we may be Holy; Therefore be ye Holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. Being convinced of our Sin and Misery, and satisfied concerning the way of Salvation, let us in good Earnest apply to the great things that concern our Everlasting Welfare; Work out our Salvation with fear and trembling. Not delay & put off, that which is of utmost Importance. We are too prone to satisfy our selves with Promises, instead of Performances. When we are Young, we promise that when we are grown up and settled in the World, that then we shall be at Leisure and will care for our Souls; but when that time comes, then we must stay till we have got things comfortable about us, and then God shall hear from us: but then an unwilling Mind finds Excuses at hand, One having married a Wife cannot come, another has bought a Farm, and another applies to his Merchandise. Thus we spend our Years as a Tale that is told. Let us Exercise our selves in duties of Piety to God, Sobriety to our selves, Justice & Charity to others, *having Repentance toward God, & Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3: *Let us be very Conversant with the holy Scriptures, where Natural Religion is Improved ; in which is contained a Revelation of all things needful for us to Know and Do. They are able to make us wise to Salvation. We shall find them to contain Balm for every Wound, Comfort under every Affliction, and strong Consolation in all Trouble. Psal. 119. 92. Unless thy Law had been my delight, I had perished in mine Affliction.*

This contains Wisdom, profitable to direct and inform us ; gracious and precious Promises to Encourage us ; bright Examples to Excite us ; and Reproofs for our Correction : It fully comes up to the Character given of it, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* We should therefore make it our Meditation both day and night ; That as a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, we may bring forth our Fruit in due Season.

4 *Let us readily Comply with, and be Influenced by the Motions of the Holy Spirit.* God sends His SPIRIT to Enlighten, Quicken, Call & Sanctify us. Let us not send Him away grieved. Let us not Quench that good Spirit, nor always Resist, as we have long done ; The Spirit calls, but we refuse to answer. He warns us, but we refuse the Admonition. We treat Him as the troubler of our Peace. When He invites us, we do not accept ; but look upon His offers as

Unreasonable or Odious. When Stephen Re-
proved the *Jews*, they treated him as a Blas-
phemer; They stopp'd their Ears and ran upon
him. Men shut their Eyes against the Light,
and stop their Ears, and Refuse Instruction, and
the necessary Means of their Salvation.

5. And lastly, *Let us be much in Prayer to
GOD, that having Instructed us in a Religion so
wise, so good, so well attested, that we may be Firm
in our Belief, and Sincere in the Practise of it. Col.
2.6,7. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the
Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him,
and established in the faith, as ye have been taught,
abounding therein with thanksgiving. Let us Pray
that we may be stedfast & unmoveable, always a-
bounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing
our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. He
hath Required nothing of us but what tends to
the Perfecting of our Nature; To make us both
wiser & better. He hath Forbidden us nothing,
but what would be sooner or later Prejudicial to
us. He hath Requir'd us to Believe nothing that
is Incredible; nor to Do any thing but what by
his gracious Spirit he can Enable us to Perform.
Therefore let us Seek to Him for Help, who is
an Help, and a present Help in time of need.*

*Let us conclude in the words of the Apostle, Jude, 24,
25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless before the presence of his
Glory with exceeding Joy. To the only wise God our
Saviour, be Glory & Majesty, Dominion & Power,
both now & ever. Amen.*

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